

*Supply—Fisheries*

season is over or in the middle of it. I should like to ask the Minister of Fisheries whether he would consult me on some of these lacks and deficiencies and exercise some influence on his colleague in the cabinet, the Minister of Public Works. I will not name the individual items now because I do not think it appropriate, but I shall be very glad to bring them up in detail later in the course of the consideration of the minister's estimates.

I recall hearing the hon. member for Queens in his speech this afternoon make some comment on the increase in this year's estimates of the department. I observe that the increase over last year has been some 11.5 per cent, but I also note that the total amount is about one quarter of the total value of the 1966 exports of fish from Canada, which was about \$219 million. I am not so concerned about the amount so long as it is worth while. It is a very substantial overhead figure and consequently it is imperative that it be well spent or we will indeed not get fair value in return.

Earlier in the debate mention was made of the east coast salmon fisheries. I should like to hear from the minister on what has been done or what can be done in connection with protecting the salmon in the Davis straits area, where I understand it has now been discovered they gather for their return to the east coast rivers to spawn. The salmon fisheries in the east coast, while not of the same tonnage proportion as those on the west coast, are extremely important to the economy of the maritime provinces, and it would be nothing short of tragic were protective measures not taken soon enough and in adequate proportions to protect this important item in the economy of the maritimes.

I have heard a number of comments from people in the western part of Nova Scotia on the question of the berried lobster, that is female lobsters producing eggs when in the pounds. I should like to hear from the minister as to why it would not be more practical and in the better interests of conservation to establish a system whereby the pound owners would be reimbursed for lobsters which they bought in good faith and under legal conditions for pounding during the season. When these lobsters are found to be in that condition they could be purchased and returned to sea. I have not at all been satisfied so far with any of the arguments against such procedure. I understand that the fish buyers pay a certain licence, which I believe is \$1,000; but surely that cannot be a controlling factor in this matter, because the propagation of the

species should be far more important than the odd thousand dollars received in licence fees from pound owners.

I must emphasize that the 12 mile fishing limit continues to be an extremely lively and important issue in Nova Scotia, particularly in my constituency which lies in the western part of the province. While I appreciate the pre-occupation of the Secretary of State for External Affairs with a most vital issue at the present time, I hope that this temporary interruption of his attention will not result in a forgetfulness concerning the 12 mile limit for another year, two or three.

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Chairman, I would like simply to ask the minister a question. As he knows, several hon. members have referred this afternoon to the seal problem, and the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra put forward a suggestion that possibly in the fall some matters in connection with the subject could be referred to the fisheries committee. As the minister knows, there is a group in Canada which has been campaigning very vigorously for the abolition of the seal hunt. I do not know whether it is numerous, but many allegations and demands have been made and even what I would consider to be some unnecessary language was used by these people. My point is that to a private member there seems to be many contradictory statements and many facts which I feel should be clarified. Therefore I wonder whether the minister would consider referring the whole problem of seal hunting in the gulf of St. Lawrence to the fisheries committee, which would not only study the problem of seal hunting but also the economic conditions and everything else that might pertain to seal hunters. There have been allegations that we could very easily do away with the seal hunt and that the sealers would still be able to find other means of employment. There has been a dispute over how much the sealers get out of seal hunting, and who benefits from the seal hunt, whether Canadians or people in other countries.

● (8:20 p.m.)

I think it would be worth while bringing these people before a committee so they could give evidence to support their claims. They would be subjected to cross-examination and re-examination and experts from the Department of Fisheries could also appear and give evidence. I think that then the public in Canada could be properly informed on all sides of this issue. As it is, the group that has been organized is going round the country